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National Americanization Committee

A call to national service

New York

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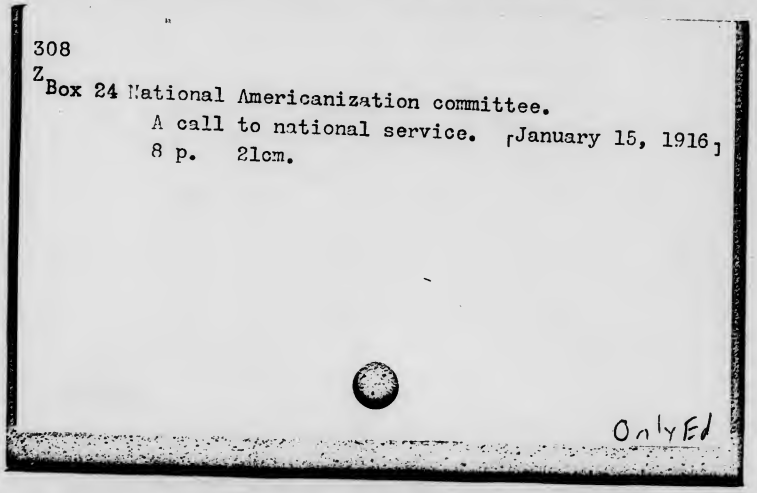

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A Call

To

National Service

National Americanization Committee

20 WEST 34th STREET

NEW YORK

Mn. 16-1916-03.

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National Americanization Committee

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The National Americanization Committee is a body of fifty-six citizens from all parts of the country, representing many different interests in American life.

Why the Committee Was Formed

Origin.—The Committee was formed in May, 1915, to promote a nationwide movement to bring American citizens, foreign born and native alike, together on our national Independence Day to celebrate the common privileges and define the common loyalties of all Americans, wherever born. As a result of the Americanization movement thus begun, 106 cities held citizenship receptions in connection with their Fourth of July celebrations.

Permanent Organization.—The result was an increased interest in citizenship, and a clearer understanding of the national importance of the assimilation of our immigrant population in many communities in all parts of the country. The Committee received many requests for information and assistance in the work of Americanization from different sources and sections. It found that although many governmental departments, organizations and industries have for years been carrying on the work of Americanization in their different lines, no government department or private body has carried on this work, *in all its aspects, as a national task.* The Committee hopes to correlate the efforts of the agencies in the country concerned with Americanization, for **National Citizenship Service.**

What the Committee Is

The Committee is a clearing-house, not a membership organization. It deals with governmental departments, schools, courts, chambers of commerce, churches, women's clubs, patriotic organizations, institutions and groups as units of co-operation—not primarily with individuals. It plans and organizes work for local organizations, enabling them better to execute their local work. It standardizes Americanization work and methods and stimulates thought, interest and activity. It conducts experiments which later are incorporated into the governmental, educational and business systems of the country. It derives its support from contributions—not from dues or assessments. Its services and publications are free.

The Committee's Object

The object is—**AMERICANIZATION:**

The union of the many peoples of the country into one nation.

The use of the English language throughout the nation.

American standards of living in every community.

A common interpretation of American citizenship.

A recognition of foreign-born men and women in the human, social and civic, as well as the industrial, aspects of our American life.

The Committee believes that this definition of Americanization involves equal responsibilities for native and for foreign-born American residents:

For native, in the abolition of race prejudice; in a better understanding of the meaning of America; in a recognition of the fact that American citizenship means equal opportunities and privileges, as well as equal obligations.

For foreign-born, in responsibility for learning and using the language of this country; for becoming literate; for becoming efficient citizens and loyally supporting the best ideals and traditions of America in return for the rights America guarantees to all residents of this country.

Program of Work

The Committee recognizes that Americanization is a complex process, produced by many agencies, and not to be swiftly accomplished. But it believes that the *English language*, *American citizenship* and *American standards of living* are, without question, the first steps. The immediate work of the Committee is, therefore, confined to these main lines of effort:

An "English Language First" movement, (1) to get immigrants into night schools, where they may learn to speak, read and write English; (2) to promote the establishment of night schools for immigrants in every town where the immigrant population is a considerable factor; (3) to conduct correspondence courses through lesson leaflets, moving pictures and in other ways for immigrants that live in remote places, outside the province of local school boards.

An "America First" campaign to facilitate the naturalization of foreign-born residents, (1) by establishing civics classes where there are night schools; (2) by making a direct connection between these schools and the naturalization courts; (3) by adopting standardized courses of study in all schools that prepare for citizenship; (4) by attaching greater ceremony to the taking of the oath of allegiance; (5) by interesting the American community in every new group of foreign-born citizens by means of official citizenship receptions; (6) by not only emphasizing to the foreign-born the necessity of undivided loyalty to America, but by bringing home to the American-born the common interests and privileges of all American citizens.

A "Conservation" movement, (1) to safeguard the labor supply and improve relations between employers and immigrant workmen; (2) to direct the attention of employers to the fact that immigrant workmen, because of their ignorance of the English language, are peculiarly subject to industrial accidents and to industrial misunderstanding with consequent labor troubles; (3) to point out to employers the forces that retard Americanization, with recommendations for their improvement; (4) to draw the attention of business men and bankers to the fact that when immigrant workmen are property holders and have investments in America they are at once a more stable industrial asset, and more competent residents in our cities; to provide, therefore, adequate safeguards for

immigrant workmen's savings and investments as a part of our national conservation policy.

An "American Standard of Living" campaign, (1) to carry American standards through the immigrant sections of our cities; (2) to Americanize foreign-born women and make the immigrant home an American home; (3) to recommend to state and city departments, industries, etc., methods of carrying into immigrant sections American ideas and standards of cleanliness, ventilation, hygiene, sanitation; (4) to co-operate with health departments in making it impossible for ignorance of American customs, climate and conditions to lower the standards of public health; (5) to make the American population of towns and cities realize that immigrants cannot observe standards of living which they do not know and which have never been interpreted to them.

Clearing-House Agencies

To carry out these policies the Committee believes that practically every agency of nation and municipality is required. The following illustrate the agencies used and the methods followed:

Schools—Establishing school facilities proportionate to the adult immigrant population; devising methods of getting immigrants into school; giving them adequate instruction of a kind calculated to keep their interest when they get there; regarding adult immigrant education as a matter requiring special qualities in teachers, special material, special methods of instruction.

Courts—Urging a simplifying of the naturalization process, without a lowering of standards; increasing court facilities; asking for night sessions to accommodate the men that dare not lose time from their work; connecting examination in court and civic preparation received in night school; bringing about more ceremony and dignity in connection with taking the oath of allegiance.

Municipal Departments and Bureaus—Interesting Recreation Commissions, Park, Police and Health Departments. Health Departments may co-operate by especially instructing nurses who work in immigrant homes; regulating midwives; instituting a system of birth registration; carrying to immigrant homes American standards of home sanitation and personal hygiene.

Chambers of Commerce—Becoming a clearing house for the work of industries in support of night schools; taking the initiative in launching night-school campaigns for boards

of education; making permanent plans for community work; organizing a follow-up system for employers with reference to night-school records; giving citizenship receptions for new voters; presenting to cities and boards of estimate the civic importance of Americanizing foreign-born workmen and their families and the logic of expending taxpayers' money to do so; acting as a clearing-house in Americanization work, not only for industries, but also for city departments and social agencies.

Industries—Supporting the night-school authorities in getting the men to school and keeping them there; distributing leaflets through pay envelopes, especially in places where the establishment of night schools is delayed; adopting a policy of preferring men that are attending night school and making an effort to learn English; following up the night-school progress of the men; using posters, slips in pay envelopes, noon-hour talks to promote interest in night schools and American citizenship, carefully explaining the meaning and the advantages of American citizenship.

Labor Organizations—Translating American industrial conditions and ideals to foreign-born fellow workmen; interpreting the principles of labor organization; encouraging American standards of living and American investments.

Racial Societies—Interesting racial leaders in the Americanization of their less Americanized fellow countrymen; translating to America the artistic, intellectual and spiritual tendencies and capacities of the particular race; finding American opportunities and training for the especially gifted; winning the confidence of the newly arrived in native American agencies; giving direction to the work of Americanization so that the best of the native quality is retained in the process of Americanization.

Churches—Establishing classes for the very newly arrived, wherever these are not adequately cared for by the public night schools; having social occasions to bring in the foreign-born of the parish or congregation; calling conferences designed to bring together all the churches and religious organizations in the community in the work of Americanization.

Colleges—Presenting "immigration" to students not merely as a remote economic problem, but as a practical crisis to be faced by every industrial community of the country; training students to carry on the work of Americanization in the various communities by equipping them with a knowledge of the history of immigration in America, the qualities and tendencies of the various races, the influence of immigration upon American industry and social life; and by giving students the technical preparation necessary for teaching immigrants, and the expert knowledge concerning housing, water supply, etc., that will enable them to work intelligently for American standards of living throughout their communities.

Patriotic Organizations — Co-operating with schools and courts in the practical work of preparing for citizenship; supplementing the efforts of these agencies with lecture courses, library facilities, etc., designed to provide candidates for citizenship with a broad understanding of American government, of the fundamentals of the present political organization, and other matters which an intelligent voter needs to know.

Women's Clubs—Introducing American standards of living in the immigrant sections of towns and cities; co-operating with public health departments and public schools in securing the education of immigrant women; establishing afternoon classes in English and civics for women where the public school system is not sufficiently developed to do this; sending "domestic educators" or "friendly visitors" to immigrant homes to give practical instructions in American housekeeping methods, care of babies, and principles of sanitation.

In addition to the community forces named above, all organizations that have any point of contact with the immigrant population have a part in Americanization. These include: juvenile courts, hospitals, settlements and many other agencies and departments.

Illustrations of the work accomplished during the first six months by the National Americanization Committee, in coöperation with the agencies outlined, include night school publicity campaigns in Detroit and Syracuse under the auspices of Chambers of Commerce, and in Wilmington, Delaware; state training courses for teachers as in New York State and Michigan; college training courses for social service in immigration, introduced in whole or in part in Yale, Columbia and Chicago Universities, Beloit and Tufts Colleges, and a number of other colleges and universities; preliminary surveys in cities to serve as the basis of Americanization work;

plans and outlines for teaching English and civics; speakers bureau and bulletin, and Americanization conferences, notably the National Conference in Philadelphia, January, 1916; prize competitions, among which is the housing contest now in progress for the best plans for houses especially designed for industrial towns of rapid growth; the publication of a quarterly magazine, the *Immigrants in America Review*, for clearing information of Americanization work as conducted by agencies public and private throughout the country. Upon all of these subjects the National Americanization Committee will be very glad to furnish detailed information.

The work of Americanization can never be completely done by the government or by organizations. It depends upon the understanding sentiment and support of the American community. To that end are needed lectures, conferences, meetings, representing all the forces in a given city or state, and newspaper publicity designed to spread an understanding of the importance of the Americanization movement to the community and to the nation.

It is the average American citizen's attitude toward his foreign-born neighbor which will determine the success of Americanization as a national task. The "immigration problem" will never be socially and economically solved by American business, by Congress, and by legislatures until it has been humanly solved by the American-born co-resident, fellow-workman and fellow-citizen.

The National Americanization Committee appeals to every native and every foreign-borr citizen to do his part.

January 15, 1916.

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